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EVALUATION OF PROJECT HEAD START READING READINESS IN ISSAQUENA AND SHARKEY COUNTIES, MISSISSIPPI, SUMMER, 1965. FINAL REPORT.

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THE SUBSTANCE OF THIS FINAL REPORT ON THE HEAD START PROJECT OF 1965 IN MISSISSIPPI IS A DEEP CONCERN WITH THE EFFECT OF THE SOCIAL MILIEU IN WHICH THE PROJECT STRUGGLED RATHER THAN WITH THE USUAL VARIETY OF STATISTICS AND RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS. THIS IS DUE, IN PART, TO THE PAUCITY OF SIGNIFICANT RESULTS AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, TO THE SHOCKINGLY DISRUPTIVE CHARACTER OF THE SOCIAL ATTITUDES IN THE AREA. FOR EXAMPLE, ALTHOUGH THE HEAD START STAFF WAS SUFFICIENTLY BUSY RECRUITING PUPILS AND PREPARING LESSONS AND CLASSROOM FACILITIES, IT BECAME ALSO NECESSARY THAT THEY GUARD THESE FACILITIES FROM VANDALISM AND ARSON. ALSO, THE STAFF WAS MADE AWARE OF THE THREAT TO NEGRO PARENTS THAT THEY WOULD LOSE THEIR JOBS IF THEIR CHILDREN WERE ENROLLED IN THE PROGRAM. IN SHORT THE GENERAL WHITE ATTITUDE WAS UNCOOPERATIVE AND HOSTILE, AND THE NEGRO ATTITUDE WAS FEARFUL. NEVERTHELESS, THE READING-READINESS PROGRAM WAS CARRIED THROUGH, AND SOME RESULTS WERE OBTAINED. IT WAS DETERMINED THAT BOTH THE ALLYN AND BACON AND THE ASHTON-WARNER METHODS OF TEACHING READING WERE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN THE PHONETIC METHOD. ALSO, THE USE OF RECORDS AND RECORD PLAYERS, DISTRIBUTED TO THE PUPILS' HOMES, WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL IN STIMULATING A DESIRE TO LEARN. (WD)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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FINAL REPORT

Evaluation of Project Head Start Reading Readiness in Issaquena and Sharkey Counties, Mississippi, Summer, 1965

Introduction

In the progress report I described some of the difficulties which prevented us from fulfilling the research aspect of this project: shootings, burning of crosses, the actual burning down of one center, threats and intimidations, and, finally, the fact that many parents who sent their children to the Child Development Group of Mississippi Head Start Centers lost their jobs. When we made an exploratory trip to Mississippi in October, 1965, we were advised not to test children in rural areas because it was too dangerous. The situation remained tense and dangerous and we were able to test only 44 children of the original 189.

While we cannot offer experimental evidence of the value of the reading readiness program, its real meaning was realized in the tremendous determination of the people of Issaquena and Sharkey Counties to educate their children and to rid themselves of the shackles of slavery and second class citizenship. It was thus not surprising that the only parents who risked their livelihood and, indeed, their lives by registering their children for integrated schooling in the Fall of 1965 were those who were associated with the Child Development Group of Mississippi.

A review of what we tried to do is pertinent in the event that we may one day have an opportunity to do an adequate study or that others may wish to profit from our abortive experience.

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Analysis of Test Data

Four scores were obtained from each child in the pre-testing procedure: (a) the number of letters that the child recognized on the standard Wide Range Achievement form, (b) the number of words correctly read on the same form, (c) a quality score (see below) for performance on a draw-a-man task, and (d) a quality score (see below) for writing one's name.

Instructions for the draw-a-man task were informal, but essentially involved asking the child to draw a whole man. The child was given a blank sheet of paper and a pencil to work with. After he had completed his drawing (or refused, despite encouragement), he was asked to write his name on the same sheet of paper. If the paper was well covered by his drawing, it was turned over before he was asked to write.

The quality scores for the draw-a-man and name-writing tasks were on a 0- to 5-point scale in which 0 represented no performance at all (a blank sheet of paper) and 5 represented performance that involved a complete production with all essential parts present in their normal location. The quality scoring system was not the standard one; it was devised to give a broader distribution of scores than would have been obtained if the standard scoring procedure had been used, since most performance fell near the bottom of the standard scoring range.

Of the 189 children between the ages of five and seven (none of whom had been to school before) who were tested at the Anguilla, Cary, Mayersville, Rolling Fork, Tallula, and Valewood centers, 109 recognized no letters and 168 recognized no words. Only 20 children knew the alphabet. Of the 189 only 63 were available for re-testing at the end of the eight-week program (however, data is available for 150 children). Only 3 among the 63 who did not know the alphabet previously now have mastered it. (The alphabet was not specifically taught during this period.)

At the third testing period one year later (and after all had been to the first grade) only 44 of the original 189 could be found for re-testing. Of this number, 21 who did not know the alphabet previously knew it now---but only 5 of this number gave evidence that they had begun to learn to read (knew ten or more words on the Wide Range Achievement Test).

Impressions and Experiences

The remainder of this report will be a collection of material which offers impressions and experiences of people who were associated with me in the project.

1. A description of the Record Program appeared in Scholastic Teacher, Vol. 12, no. 9 (April, 1966).
2. A teacher writes a song based upon conversations with Frederick, six years old:

Children's Song of the Mississippi Delta

For Frederick

My pappa's choppin cotton,
Mama's yonder pickin beans,
I'm sittin on the front porch
Waitin on the rains.

CHORUS:

Rains a-gonna wet me,
Rains a-gonna fall,
Rains a-gonna make me grow
Fo feets tall.

Grits n rice n tatas,
Eat up all I can.
I'm too small to be a-workin
Fo the white boss man

Catch a lil ole toad frog
Put im in a can.
If'n he go n wet on you
The sores grow on yo hand.

Blacksnake in the corn field
Kill im with a hoe,
Bring im to my sister Bea
And watch her go!

I gots a sister Pody
A-sleepin in my bed.
She goin to the white school
Right soon, my mama said.

My big brother Shorty gone
On a Greyhound bus today.
The Army's gonna work im
In 'Cago far away.

Rains a-gonna wet me,
Rains a-gonna fall,
Rains a-gonna make me grow
Fo feets tall.

(Arranged by Nancy Babcock, Head Start Teacher, Rolling Fork, Miss.)

3. The children write books:

"Book One"

A girl eats ice cream
cake
beans.
Marzetta eats chicken.

A boy eats rice
peas
milk
Coca-Cola.
Lester eats turkey.

Boys and girls eat
ice cream
cake
beans
rice
peas
milk
Coca-Cola.

Boys and girls play
with a telephone
with a car
with a TV
with a dog
with a doll.

A girl eats.

A boy plays.

Boys and girls

eat and play.

"Book Two"

LUSTER has a hammer.
LUSTER has a car.

MARILYN has a TV.
MARILYN has a mop.
MARILYN has a doll.

MARZETTA has a book.
MARZETTA has a house.
MARZETTA has a nest.
MARZETTA has a school-
house.

DALE has Mr. Bunny.
DALE Kills Mr. Bunny.

Mr. Bunny is a boy.

LUSTER is a boy.
JACKIE is a boy.
FRED is a boy.
DALE is a boy.

MARZETTA is a girl.
MARILYN is a girl.

FRED eats a moonpie.
FRED eats a stageplank.
FRED eats orange juice.

MARILYN eats ice cream.
MARILYN eats cake.
MARILYN eats milk.

MARZETTA eats ice cream.
MARZETTA eats egga.

JACKIE eats Cheerios.

Boys eat.
Girls eat.
Boys and girls eat.

4. A Negro teacher from the North writes her report:

The Rolling Fork Head Start Center opened on the first day of school with 59 children and a staff of 15. The original enrollment was 130, but due to the harrassment from the plantation owners, the public, school superintendent, the fear of the people and the general "don't care" attitude of some of the community, we had 77 children on roll for 7 weeks. These 77 children were gotten the hard way. People on the Head Start committee went from door to door, took chances on going on plantations, trying to prove to people that the Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM) centers were not "Freedom Schools." To induce them to participate in the program we had to insure them that the federal government was supporting these centers as well as the public school centers. Many hours were spent showing that the CDGM centers would be better because the public school centers would have the same teachers who teach their children during the regular school year. Furthermore, the public school system would not offer their children what our centers would offer.

I must point out that the public school centers were held in the public school building with all of the facilities available to them. Nothing extra had to be done in order for their schools to be opened. There was no transportation problem whatever, because school buses were used. They could feel at ease going on plantations and picking up children. They could close their doors after school and their buildings would be safe. On the other side of the coin is an entirely different story. Our buildings were old and needed a tremendous amount of work to be done on them in order to get them even half ready for the opening date. Our routes were very long and our drivers were constantly in fear as they took the children to and from their homes. Our centers had to be guarded day and night. The community was required to contribute service to defray their required 10% of the cost in volunteered manpower. We were forced to use the parents of the community as trainees and aides even though most of them did not have a high school education. Why did Negro teachers in Rolling Fork sacrifice their dignity and accept jobs

as aides in the public school Head Start, rather than teach in the C. D. G. M. schools? Resource teachers had to be brought in from outside of Mississippi. Taking all of these disadvantages of the C. D. G. M. centers and weighing them against the advantages of the public school centers, our centers were by far the better centers.

The Negro people in Rolling Fork are living under such great fear that it made many of them lose sight of what they really wanted for their children. The majority of the community was very uncooperative in their support of the program because of fear - fear of being associated with the Civil Rights Movement and because of repercussions from their employers and landlords. The Negro teachers were intimidated by the superintendent of schools and as a result refused to work in C. D. G. M. centers. This fear and the hatred are in the children also. Betty, a little girl of 7 who should have been spending her days playing and loving, is hating both herself for being a Negro and the whites, whether friend or foe. She had a slight accident and the wound was being treated daily by me, after a visit to the doctor. The older sister cut the stitches out "because the white doctor put them in." One day the C. D. G. M. doctor came to treat the wound and little Betty went into hysterics and refused treatment because of her mixed emotions about the white superiority.

The Ku Klux Klan and the White Citizens Council are very real organizations in Rolling Fork, Mississippi. Rolling Fork is not a place for Negroes to get a restful night's sleep or have a peaceful day. The white population of Rolling Fork, including the police, have sacrificed their pleasure to keep the Negroes "in their place." We were shot at, followed day and night, had crosses burned near our homes and on our pick-up routes. We were taunted with filthy, dirty names. One of our centers was burned to ashes. I was personally insulted in the post office, asked to reveal the contents of my mail, ignored at the desk, and overcharged for a mail box.

The children of Rolling Fork see their parents cringe when the white man walks to their door. They wake up in the morning and find

their parents, older brothers and sisters have gone to the fields. They hear the baby crying in the other bed and know that they have to take care of him or her for the next 10 to 12 hours. Many times they are only babies themselves. They hear their parents talking during the night about the long, hard, money-less winters ahead. They know when school starts that they will not go because they have no clothing to wear. They see a book, maybe, and wonder what the words will tell them and when will they ever be able to hear them read from their own lips. Is there any reason why their inferiority grows daily rather than diminish? Can you blame them for hating the image the whites stand for? Can you blame them for their poor self-image and self-worth?

Even though the white population of Rolling Fork is approximately 1/3 of the total population - their presence is strongly felt. They walk softly and carry the big stick. Approximately 57% of the Negro population lives on plantations - about 2% lives in plantation-owned homes and approximately 1% live in their own homes. Needless to say, the 59% live a life of horror, harrassment, agony, shame and futility. They live a day-by-day, bare-existence sort of life. They work in the cotton fields for $2.50 per day - some liberal-minded owner will pay $3.00 per day. The compress factory affords jobs for approximately 100 Negroes for 4½ months a year. The hours are long and the money is short - 16 hours a day, 6½ days a week at $50 to $55.00 per week. After that, nothing - nothing but a few domestic workers - good pay? Yes, $10.00 a week for 8 hours a day and 5 days per week.

Prejudice is seen not only with the whites, but also among Negroes. Unfortunately we had three working with us. The two Negroes had been oppressed so long and working with Head Start was probably the only real chance they have had in their lives to live and work with whites. They poured out all of the revenge for the Mississippi whites on the two white resource teachers and on the Negro teachers because they could not feel the same. The white worker, as the psychologist said, felt guilty concerning the conditions forced on the Negro by people of his

race. He then took his guilt out on the Negro workers who didn't agree with him and on the white workers at the center.

The C. D. G. M. Head Start program was the best thing that had ever happened to the Rolling Fork Negro children. The program gave most of them the only and most nourishing meal of the day. The program made it possible for them to get complete physicals, which some had not had since birth. These physicals uncovered many physical defects of which the parents had no knowledge. The parents were also given an insight of what school should be like and what children could learn if given the chance. The children were taken on trips which gave them more outlets for free expression. They had the opportunity to work, play, and learn in environments which they never had before. They heard stories, read pictures and told original stories with some one there to listen. They were encouraged to keep talking rather than STOP talking. Parents were encouraged to visit classrooms. They were made to feel a part of their children's school. They were given the opportunity to offer suggestions and know that they would be acted upon. They felt respected by the teachers and not looked down on. In short, they saw what teachers in their public schoolrooms should be, and were given the opportunity to tell what they wanted for their children and helped to fulfill their own faraway dreams of the future. The program gave jobs to people of the community which enabled them to live better than they ever had.

The public school centers were only glorified nurseries, taught by the same disinterested teachers in Rolling Fork holding classes for only 2½ hours offering nothing special but a well-equipped building. I am speaking mainly of Sharkey and Issaquena Counties. By contrast the four centers in the twin counties offered four well-designed Reading Programs. With these programs we had a record and record player program to supplement what the children were getting in the centers. A record player was placed in the home of each of the children in the four centers. Each family received three different records, one adult's and two children's, every three days. The parents were asked to set aside approximately

twenty minutes each day to play these records and discuss them with their children. From time to time the children were asked in class to tell about their records and they were discussed. The parents were asked to invite other people to their homes who did not have the records. The records were rotated so all of the families would have a chance to hear them all by the end of the summer program. We also had one of each record in each center, and these were played some time each day to the children at school. At the close of the summer Head Start the families, hopefully, would be allowed to keep the records and players and we would follow-up during the year with spot checks to insure that the records were being used and note the children's progress.

This record distribution program goes hand in hand with the reading readiness in that the children have varied things to talk about that they have not heard before, never have seen and probably will not see for years to come. This helps them with their verbal expression, muscular coordination (some records are physical fitness and action records) and in many other ways. These children in Rolling Fork are terribly depressed, very shy, and their oral expression is practically nil. We had fifty different records.

The Allyn and Bacon Reading Program (which I am teaching at the Poplar Street center) is designed to help children become aware of colors, shapes, sizes, similarity and differences in objects, patterns and reversals. To help develop auditory discrimination, vocabulary, growth in oral expression, eye-hand coordination, recalling good work habits, ability to follow directions, to acquaint the children with books and to develop independent thinking. It also helps to develop the awareness of the sequence of events within a story and to enrich the child's concept of the world around him.

The materials used with this series include various cut-out objects. These are divided into four categories: Toys, tea party, transportation, and shapes and colors. They are used to teach visual discrimination and other concepts.

Examples: square, circles, and triangles
(lesson words)
boxes, balls, Indian houses
(children's words)

Two objects alike - one is different
same object carried over in writing their alphabets.
M combination of two different kinds of lines
C ½ of a circle

Repetition and emphasis are a necessary part of every lesson. This is accomplished in the actual lesson as well as with the work sheets. Supplementary and enrichment sheets are used to reinforce work areas in addition to the above materials, there are sets of pictures and cut-outs that are used to develop interesting picture stories. Pictures, in sequence, tell a story, provide a way to develop fluency in forming sentences, describing action and story development.

There is also a phonics readiness program which develops the children's auditory perception by having them identify sounds made by objects and animals. Helping children to learn to listen is very important in learning the phonics necessary for reading.

This reading program is important to children before starting to school, especially the underprivileged children, regardless of race, creed or color. All of the things I have described under the Allyn and Bacon Reading Program are essential things that children should have some awareness of before entering school. Many good kindergarten teachers stress some of these things in one way or another during a school year, but not fully. I do feel, however, if this particular series was a part of their daily academic classroom procedures that the total value of it could be stressed. The contents of the series are so well defined, and the lessons are so clear that it leaves no room for guessing as to how a teacher will introduce a certain skill.

Most of the children with whom we used this series in Mississippi were wholly culturally, socially, and economically deprived. After just 7 weeks, which is only one marking period for a regular school year, I was amazed at the progress of these children even though an outsider may not see the progress. It is true that no two of them progressed at the same rate but the progress was still remarkable. I would like to cite some progress reports of a few children. I kept a weekly log for the first two weeks - then a log every three days.

Mary - July 12-16

Mary Frances is an extremely shy girl, finds it very difficult to talk to an outsider (which is anyone outside of her immediate family and her friends). She has no idea of how to follow directions and her attention span is very short. She knows three colors which she learned from an older sister. She doesn't know how to use scisssors as they have none in their home. She doesn't know her left hand from her right.

July 10-23

Mary seems very eager to learn and she is beginning to look at me when we converse. She still isn't sure of her left and right, but I hope to see more progress next week. She takes great care to see that her scissors are held with the right fingers.

August 2-6

Mary has learned to associate her left hand with the go sign in the lessons and the home of the rabbit friends. Her right hand she finally associated with the stop sign and the home of her animal friends.

August 9-13

Mary now knows that lines have different shapes. She associates a circle with a ball, a square with a box, a rectangle with a door and a triangle with a slice of pie. She was able to recall quite well the grown-up names for the objects she knew by child-like names. She was also able to find the objects which were alike with a great deal of accuracy.

August 16-20

Mary's recall this week was very good. She now knows all of her colors and was able to tell why each object was different.

August 23-27

I am very pleased at Mary's progress. Although she is able to do these things with a great deal of accuracy, she still needs individual attention and praise. She is still a bit shy with other people although with me she is not. We are able to communicate with each other very well.

Rose - -July 12-16

Rose knows only two colors - white and black. She will not or cannot follow directions (as of now I don't know). She is very shy and will not speak loudly in order to be heard. Her attention span is very short and she will only do something when she is told directly and will not finish anything.

July 19-23

Rose is still quite shy but will tell me stories privately even though they are senseless, short two or three line stories. I gave her permission to take work home Wednesday. She finished it but couldn't tell me how she did it.

July 26-30

Rose was definite in her recall of the two colors we had the first two weeks. She is not quite sure of the left to right, but she had accurate recall of the story in sequence this week.

August 2-6

Rose was quite able this week to "read" (object reading) the lines of "Our Book."

<u>Comments by Parents on Program</u>

I am glad we have a school like this because the other school is

not as good as this. They never want to stay home. She sings, does exercises, talks more - coloring is much improved - dances. He talks about the school and teachers all of the time - never wants to miss a day - plays record player all of the time and tries to remember what is on the records - much learning is taking place everyday. She talks more freely - she begins to call her friends by name - He plays record player and enjoys the records, doesn't want to miss a day. She enjoyed the trips, got better lunches - learns to imitate animals as result of trips, stories and records played in the school She pronounces things much plainer - first didn't want to come but found out it was because he had to study. After I put my foot down and found out that he had to go now they enjoy everything about the school and tells the things at home. We have done a fine job and really wish this school could continue.... never had a record player before - learned how to play it and never misses a day playing.

Parents did offer to give a day to the school and many felt that their children were worth giving a day's work for.

In all pilot programs many, many things are done that could be done differently and better.

1. Trainees spent too little time in the classroom.
2. Trainees smoked in classroom while class was in progress.
3. Trainees napped in classroom while class was in progress.
4. There was no structured activity - disciplinary problems existed.
5. Trainees' main concern was to make children read - not understanding that many experiences must take place before reading.
6. Numbers and alphabets were taught in a series fashion - result: children learned by rote and not recognition.
7. Playground was not properly supervised.
8. Good work habits were not stressed - result: classroom materials were not used to the best advantage.
9. Many "quiet, shy" children were not helped by the program because they were not troublemakers.

10. Parent participation was not as it should have been because of fear, among other reasons.

Suggestions

1. There should be a "person incharge" of each center during school hours. Many community chairmen are working during school hours and, as a result, the ultimate is not accomplished.
2. Orientation should be more thorough.
   a. The trainees are community people and most do not have 9th grade education. They have no knowledge of what, how, or when to do - most want to learn.
   b. The orientation should be regular classroom situations - not ideal ones, so they will learn by doing and not by being "told how and what to do." They should be helped in learning how to plan.
   c. Aides should be told their specific duties and should also be given the opportunity to learn by doing.
   d. Trainees and aides should be thoroughly oriented on how to conduct themselves in the classroom and around children.
3. Health aides should be given a short course in first aid before being assigned. (The health aides had no idea how totreat simple cuts and bruises.)
4. The part-time help (cooks - dish washers) should be told their specific duties.
   a. They should have a short course in nutrition and food handling.
   b. A course should be given in correct homemaking.
5. The program should be more structured to the point that the trainees would have more varied activities at their disposal so every child will be participating in some way.
6. I feel that workers who are brought into work with the various centers should have a genuine interest in education, not only for the children but for the community as a whole, and not primarily interested in civil rights.
7. I would suggest that transportation be made available for parents to attend P. T. A. meetings, regular classroom visitations, and home visitations by the teachers. The majority of the parents do not have transportation and the community people do not want to travel the long

routes in their private cars for many reasons.

8. I think that protection of the centers and workers should be secured. Too many manhours are lost by community and workers in being night watchmen.

General Observation

I would suggest that a thorough investigation be made of all the government-supported agencies. Considering the fact that the state of Mississippi received more money for health agencies than any other state - it is shocking to know how little aid the Negroes receive in Rolling Fork. Because of the Head Start program, many children were found in need of extensive follow-up care. There is no provision made, as far as the health department is concerned, for a follow through. The doctors in Rolling Fork were not co-operative at all. Children had to be taken to the Greenville and Vicksburg doctors by C. D. G. M. schools for medical attention. The clinic refused to furnish the medicine needed for the tests taken by the children. After much persuasion, it furnished a portion. Our center was given surplus government food which had not been very well kept. The margarine was too spoiled to be usable. Why aren't the people of Rolling Fork getting this food rather than having it spoiled?

I think that the employment and housing situation in Rolling Fork should be very thoroughly investigated. The people will never be in a position to take full advantage of the anti-poverty program as long as they live on plantations and are subjected to abuse, threats, starvation and finally evictions by the plantation owners who control their every breath.

There must be a thorough follow-up after pilot programs are initiated. Community people who work in these programs for the short time they exist are subjected to the bottomless humility when the program is over.

There should be an "on-the-spot" check of the existing conditions now that the schools are integrated. The Negro registration was approxi-

mately 100 with the opening of school on September 2nd - now it has dropped to approximately 40. Plantation owners threatened to evict if the children stayed in the "white school." Many people have lost their jobs and some their "shacks." Why should these conditions exist when America is the land of plenty and anti-poverty money is plentiful? Why can we find money and Americans for all of the unknown places overseas and we have so many, many unknown places here?

I realize that the 8½ weeks I spent in Rolling Fork worked no miracles and only the surface was scratched, but I know something was accomplished. I hope that we who worked in Rolling Fork will be able to make a few people want to help Rolling Fork find its "place in the Sun."

Submitted by Mrs. Bessie Williamson, Head Start Teacher, Rolling Fork, Mississippi

5. A white teacher from the North writes his report:

REACTIONS OF THE CHILDREN

The children in the four centers, generally, were very poor verbally. They spoke too quietly and too indistinctly. Often times these children covered their mouths, looked down at the ground and turned away when they were speaking to me. It was obvious that some of the verbal problems that these children had were caused by their fear of White people. However, even when the children at the Rolling Fork Center became more familiar with me, their basic problems with language remained evident.

In the beginning of the summer, many of the children couldn't say their names or ages distinctly. Some of the children did not even know their own names or how old they were. There was improvement in this area during the seven week program.

Even though the children constantly watch T.V., their English does not improve. I cannot explain the reason why the children don't improve their use of language from watching T.V. Perhaps they do not improve their language because they don't fully understand what the T.V. programs are about. Or maybe because the actors on T.V. are almost all White, the lack of identification with those persons speaking proper English results in the Negro children's not identifying with the language spoken. Also the T.V. often becomes like background music with no one really paying attention to it.

There is one positive exception involving T.V. Many of the children sing the commercials perfectly and distinctly. It appears that language put to music is learned to a significant degree in comparison to language that is not accompanied by music. These observations seem to justify the hypothesis that the record players and records that were given to each family with a child in the center would help

improve the children's verbal skills. While we had no measurement to show the effects of the record players, I think that they were beneficial as an educational tool. One thing we do know is that the children and their parents used and enjoyed the record players considerably. The following are lists of the records that the children and adults liked best:

Adults
1) We Shall Overcome - Pete Seeger
2) Negro History
3) We Shall Overcome - Folkways freedom songs
4) Human Relations

Children
1) "Brown Cow"
2) We Shall Overcome - Pete Seeger
3) Rhythm records

The children enjoyed the books but I did not find out which books they liked most. I found it difficult to read to the four year olds because they lost interest very quickly. They preferred to look at the pictures rather than listen to the story. They liked a casual comment or question about the pictures rather than the story verbatim.

The self-image of the Negro children in Mississippi is extremely poor. This is partially reflected in their verbal behavior, particularly in regard to me because I am white. The children, after they got to know me, frequently touched the hair on my arms and head. The children and the adults said I had "good hair", meaning it was straight. Bad hair, it is implied but not usually stated, is kinky hair, their kind of hair. The blacker is a person's skin often correlates with a poor self-image. The desire for light skin is illustrated by something a trainee did. One day, I went out on the porch of the center where I saw Adie, who is black, holding an extremely light-skinned baby. I acted surprised because I didn't think she had a baby. She kept telling me it was hers and it became clear to me that

she would like to have a light-skinned baby and she had interpreted my surprise to mean my disbelief that she should have a baby of that color. There is discrimination by lighter-skinned Negroes against darker-skinned Negroes. One incident that comes to mind also involves Adie. Bess observed that one girl in the six year old class would never follow any of the directions that Adie gave her in class. Being curious as to why this girl wouldn't even draw when Adie gave out crayons and paper, Bess knew the child was able to draw and asked her why she wouldn't draw something. The child responded by asking Bess if she would like her to draw a picture for Bess. Bess said yes and the child drew a perfectly adequate picture. The following story came out when Bess was discussing this child with one of the teachers. The child's mother had told her that she wanted her daughter to have a different teacher rather than Adie because Adie is black and was unfit to be a teacher. The mother told her child that she shouldn't do anything that Adie told her to do.

EVALUATION OF THE READING-READINESS PROGRAM

Community people were enthusiastic and anxious to have the reading-readiness program. Unfortunately, as you so well know, the antagonism of certain members of the central staff resulted in the program being less effective that it could have been. Their antagonism cut down our mobility and our morale.

In the implementation of the program, it became obvious that the project would not be able to maintain rigorous methods. There were too many variables that could not be controlled. The following is a list of some of the biggest problems we had:

1) The reading program materials were burned with the center at Valewood after the program had only been running for three weeks.
2) One teacher had difficulty putting her program across (personal problems,

poor facilities for crawling, etc., and a poor general attitude on the part of the staff).

3) Poor and overcfowded facilities.

4) Conflicts in the scheduling of the daily reading program with general program (particularly in Cary).

What did we learn from this project? We learned that the phonetic approach to the teaching of reading does not seem to be applicable to these kids. These children have difficulty saying many letters and combinations of letters. The results of the Ashton-Warner method indicate that this method could be an effective way of teaching reading. It might be particularly good for creating interest and motivation for disadvantaged children. This method would be more interesting to these children because it enables the material to be relevant to the lives they are living. The Allyn and Bacon method, as it was taught by Bess Williamson, seemed to be the most effective method. Besides being a preparation for learning to read, it helps the child get ready for school in other ways such as learning how to use a pencil, learning colors, and learning how to follow directions.

There were considerable problems involved with the testing. In administering the tests, we encountered a racial problem. The children, particularly when we gave the tests in the beginning, were afraid of us which, of course, affected the results of the tests. Some of the fear of Whites and the test situation were visable to us. However, much of their fear I, at least, was unable to detect. Some of the aids and trainees reported that some of the children knew such and such letters or words, but the children had been afraid to tell me, you, Judith Barbara, etc.

On the Draw-A-Man test, there were some problems in trying to communicate to the children what we were asking them to do. One example of the problem is illustrated by the difference in the way the children used the word man (and heard it

being used) and what we as testers meant by the word man. "Man" is the word used by Negroes referring to the white man or the boss.

The retests, I feel, were unreliable and invalid. I have already discussed why they were unreliable. They were not valid because as standardized reading tests they di dn't test the material that our reading-readiness program included.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL NOTES

Rolling Fork is a good example (exaggerated) of what oppression does to the Negro people in Mississippi. Rolling Fork is located in the southern part of the racist blackbelt. This little town in Sharkey County has a long history of atrocities committed by the White man against the Black man. As recently as the middle of the nineteen forties a Negro in Rolling Fork was lynched and tarred and feathered. It is no wonder that the Negro community has been fearful of Whites.

Why has the mark of oppression laid so heavily upon this Negro community whereas some other communities, who have suffered equally, have fought much more strongly for their civil rights? The majority of Negroes in Rolling Fork are sharecroppers. They do not own their own land or homes. Therefore, the people know that if they register to vote or register their children in the "White school", they will run the risk of being thrown off the plantation. This, in fact, has happened to a few families whose children were registered to go to the desegregated school this Fall.

SNCC and FDP workers have been trying to organize people in Sharkey since the "freedom vote" in late 1963. For the most part the civil rights workers have been unsuccessful. FDP meetings are attended by only a handful of people. The same is true in the area of voter registration.

The Head Start program received more support than FDP but still the support from community people just barely contributed the ten per cent of the cost of the program (in volunteer work) that the Federal Government required of all Head Start

centers. Fear which turns to paralysis and oppression which engenders in the Negro community a cycle of frustration and defeat causes community spirit and action for change to be almost nil.

Our Head Start schools did help to bring about change. Many of the parents who had enrolled their children at our centers were the same parents who enrolled their children in the "White school". Many of the parents would not have sent their children to the integrated school if they had not first had the experience with Head Start. Our CDGM centers were considered by local Whites and Negroes to be a part of a civil rights group because we had integrated staffs. Thus our centers were harassed and one, a church in Valewood, was burned down.

The "Negro school system" is a farce in Sharkey County and all over Mississippi. The Negro principals and teachers for the most part are pawns of the "White power-structure". But, these Negro educators are a willing part of the oppressive machinery. They are more interested in keeping their jobs than in teaching children. The teachers simply have no ability or interest in teaching. They spend a good deal of the school day gossiping among themselves at the water fountain. The Negro teachers play favorites. They give all their attention to the children of their friends, to the better dressed children and to the lighter-skinned children. Passing or failing has nothing to do with how well a student knows his school work. It is almost a completely subjective matter. I know a fourteen year old girl who is going into the fourth grade for the fourth year in a row because she lost one or more of her school books by the end of each year. At the end of every year, each student must return his or her books or they will not receive their report cards and, in turn, they will not be passed to the next grade.

Out of all the community staff, I feel that Adie developed as the best potential teacher and leader of the Negro community. She had the respect of her students and the rest of the staff. She chaired staff meetings and a parents' meeting early

in the summer in an adequate fashion. By the end of the summer, Adie chaired parents' meetings with complete poise. Also, she was the only trainee or aide who was fully responsible with the children, particularly in regard to making her own program for the children.

The morals of Rolling Fork were very different from those of a White or Negro middle-class community. Many young girls and married women had illegitimate children. Many married women have casual affairs with married men. After dark there is a great deal of integration. White men cruise through the Negro neighborhoods picking up Negro women whom they pay five or ten dollars. One policeman is known for his frequent use of Negro women. Negroes and Whites believe that the Negro is sexually superior to Whites.

There are several interesting things concerning the structure of the Negro family. There is much more physical closeness among the family. Brothers and sisters fondle and touch each other playfully and in a natural way. The same behavior goes on between members of the same sex. I feel this kind of physical closeness might be the reason for the seemingly good sexual adjustment of the Southern Negro. Also, there is little evidence of homosexuality among Negroes in the South.

The Negro family has some big problems. One problem involves the shifting and inconsistent parental role for the children. This results from the little children being taken care of by older children in the family. The older children take on the parental functions and image, but they are very often inconsistent and immature.

(Submitted by Peter Titleman, Head Start Teacher, Rolling Fork, Miss.)

Title of Fund: OEO-657
Account Code Number: 27-4607

Financial Report

Evaluation of Project Head Start Reading Readiness in
Issaquena and Sharkey Counties, Mississippi
July 1, 1965 - July 31, 1965

Travel and Subsistence 2nd Testing Period, August 21 - August 27:		
Plane fare for Dr. Sol Gordon and Assistant, round trip from Newark, N. J., to Jackson, Miss., $144.90 each	$	289.80
Subsistence for two persons, 6 days		122.00
Car rental,		117.20
plus 450 miles' gasoline and repairs		35.00
Travel and Subsistence 2nd Evaluation Period, Oct. 16 - Oct. 18:		
Plane fare for Dr. Sol Gordon and Professor Lawrence Hopp, round trip from Newark, N. J., to Jackson, Miss., $144.90 each		289.80
Subsistence for two persons, 2 days		44.00
Travel and Subsistence 3rd Testing Period, July 4 - July 15:		
Round trip (rented car) for two psychological assistants		
Car rental		271.70
3,100 miles' gasoline, oil, and repairs		115.00
Subsistence for two persons, 12 days		285.00
(Salaries paid by University research fund)		
Total		$1,569.50

Other Expenses:

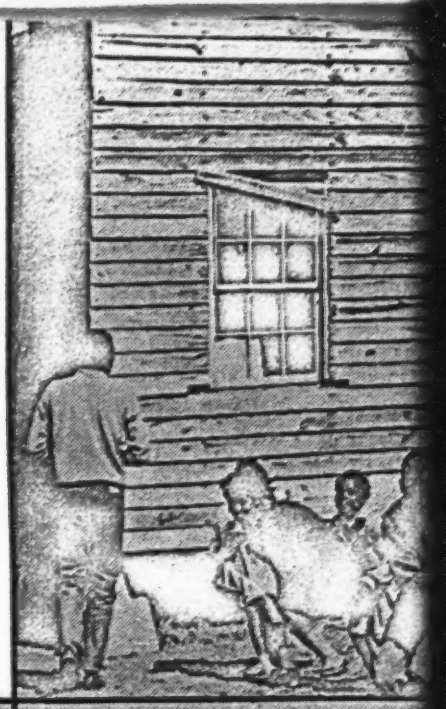
Salary for Dr. Sol Gordon for period covering July 1, 1965 to August 22, 1966	
10 weeks at $150 per week*	
25 days during July and August, 1965, in Mississippi	
25 days during the period September, 1965, to August, 1966	$1,500.00
Secretarial expenses	100.00
Telephone and postage	75.00

Purchase of equipment for special reading projects	105.00
Camera supplies	28.75
Supplies for 3rd testing period	54.95
Fee to Mr. Sidney Alexander, Rolling Fork, Miss., for arranging the testing of the children (4 days)	100.00
Fee to Dr. Florence Halpern, Consultant, for organizing and supervising the testing in Mississippi (5 days at $50 per day)	250.00
Total	$2,213.70
GRAND TOTAL	$3,783.20

* No person associated with the Child Development Group of Mississippi earned more than $150 per week. Despite an annual income considerably in excess of $12,000, I have also limited my compensation to $150 per week

A HEAD START with RECORDS— in Mississippi

A photo-story
By MAREL HARAYDA



Mrs. Harayda is a free-lance writer and photographer, North Brunswick, N. J.

"THE USE of phonographs and records should play an important part in all Head Start programs. However, we have such a strong tendency to equate learning with books and visual aids that records have taken a backseat and represent the most neglected dimension of learning." So contends Dr. Sol Gordon, associate professor of psychology and learning, at New York's Yeshiva University graduate school.

Dr. Gordon had an opportunity to test his contention in the Mississippi Delta area last summer when he served as director of the reading-readiness program for five Project Head Start centers for Negro children in the twin counties of Issaquena and Sharkey. Besides having several record players in each center, Dr. Gordon placed record players in the 150 homes the Head Start children came from.

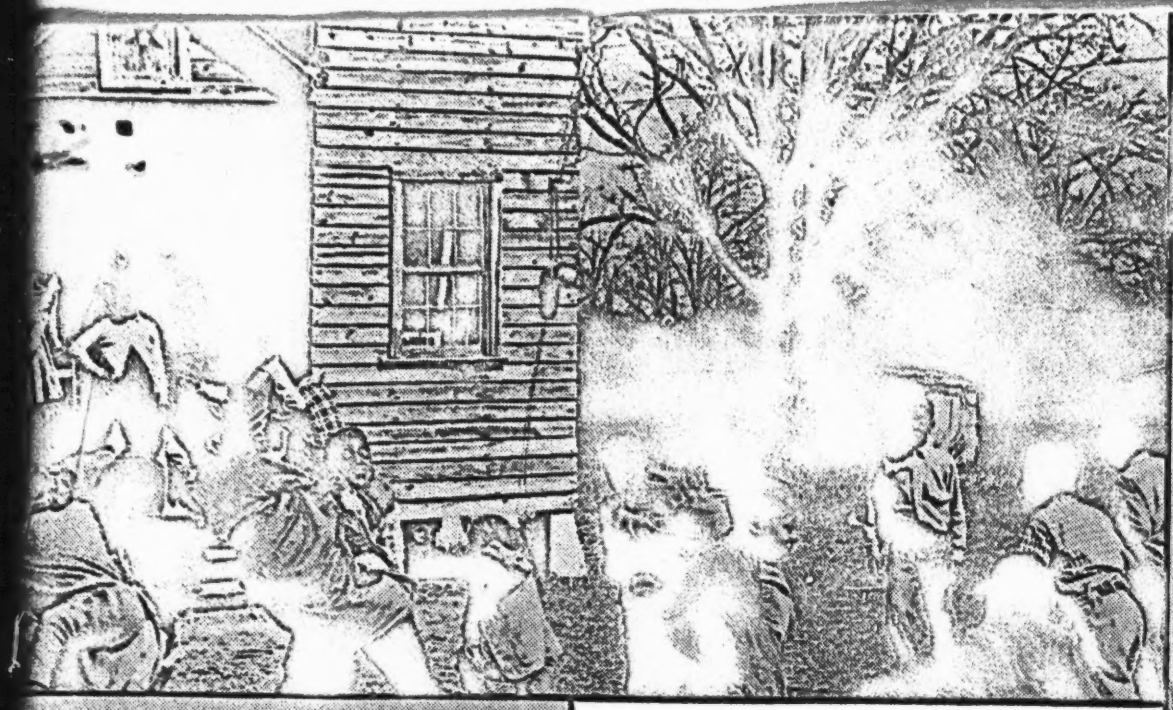
Each center's record library contained 50 different records chosen from the Folkways/Scholastic Records catalogue and the Anti-Defamation League lists (*see Discography*). Initially, each family received three records—one of adult-interest, and two for children. To enable each family to hear all 50 records by the end of the seven-week program, records were rotated every three days. Parents were asked to spend 20 minutes each day playing and discussing the records with their children. They invited neighbors in to listen to the records so that others in the community could benefit from them as well.

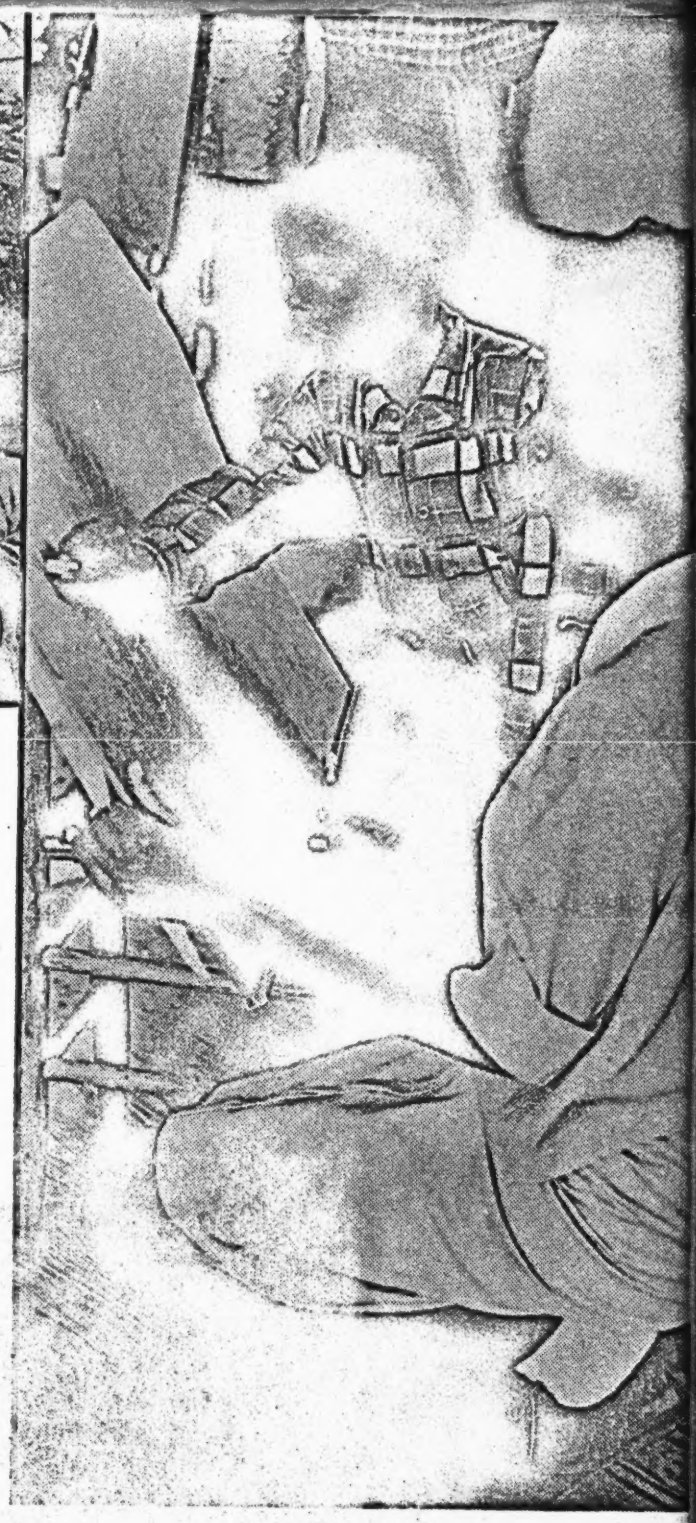
Partially to learn whether or not parents were cooperating, and partially to help develop verbal skills, children periodically were asked to tell the class about the records they had listened to at home. At PTA meetings, parents discussed their experiences with the records.

In addition to the rotating record library, there was a rotating book library, which, according to Dr. Gordon, "did not compare in effectiveness with the records."

Most parents were unenthusiastic about book distribution. Many were defensive, embarrassed, and reluctant to accept books for several reasons. Some were ashamed of their own illiteracy and did not want to admit they couldn't read. Some of those who could read were not in the habit of doing so. Many could not afford to subscribe to a newspaper or magazine, did not own books, and had no library services available to them. Many of the parents were simply too tired to cope with the printed word after a long, hard day of laboring in the cotton fields.

Negro children were not permitted to attend Head Start centers located in the public schools. Head Start centers for Negro children were organized by the Child Develop-





This 100-year-old church *(above)* in Issaquena County, Mississippi, served as a Head Start center for Negro children last summer. When this photo was taken, the church was being used as a "Freedom School" for older children. An inside view of the school *(far left)* shows attentive youngsters lined up on wooden benches. Records brought many new experiences to these Head Start children and their families. The lad *(far left, top)* is "moved" by the music he hears. The boy and girl *(at left)* seem to be entranced as they listen to a recording. A teacher-aide *(at right)* helps a Head-Starter with an art experience.

ment Group of Mississippi (CDGM), a group dedicated to Civil Rights for Negroes. CDGM centers used the only quarters available—Negro-owned, broken-down, 100-year-old churches (*see photo*), with no indoor plumbing.

The Negroes from the community who served as aides at the centers seldom had more than a ninth grade education —but they had a desire to learn. The most difficult idea for them to grasp was that reading-readiness preparation does not mean memorizing the alphabet and learning words.

Some of the Negro children traveled [illegible] miles to attend the nearest Head Start center. Most of them had never eaten an orange, been to a movie, ridden on a bus, visited a city, or even been out of their home county. They were depressed, shy, quiet, and their oral expression was practically nil.

Through the use of records they heard about things they had never heard of or seen before. In the early sessions sing-a-long records helped children develop [illegible] exercises and games accompanied by records helped develop their muscular coordination. However, the most important function of the records was to relax the children, create an atmosphere of spontaneity, and "loosen-up" these children, who in the past had always been told, "keep quiet" and, "don't speak unless you are spoken to."

In the homes, the records not only offered enjoyment, but also provided entire families with the first learning-together experiences they had ever had.

How effective the records were is demonstrated by these comments gleaned from PTA conversations: "At home Nancy plays the records all the time and tries to remember what is on them." "He is beginning to imitate animals as a result of the trips, stories, and records." "We never had a record player before—my son has learned how to use it and never misses a day playing it." "She pronounces things so much plainer." "I wish this school could continue."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Some of the records Dr. Hairston found most helpful with his project Head Start program in Mississippi were:

Folkways/Scholastic Records, 906 Sylvan Avenue, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632: *Songs to Grow On for Mother and Child, More Songs to Grow On, This Land is My Land, Animal Songs for Children, Birds, Beasts, Bugs, and Little Fishes, Folk Songs for Young People, The Glory of Negro History, Negro Poetry for Young People,* and assorted records dealing with Negro music.

Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 315 Lexington Avenue, N. Y., N. Y. 10016: *Sammy Davis Jr. Sings Black & White; Little Songs About the U. N.; Sing a Song of Friendship; Little Songs on Big Subjects; John Brown's Body; The Rabbit Brothers; Red Man, White Man, African Chief; Vegetables and People; We Are All Americans; The World of Wonderful Difference.*